

The Builder.

NO. LXXIV.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5, 1844.



R I O R to giving our intended survey of the Bath stone masonry of the

metropolis, we cannot abstain from in some sort forestalling the subject by the opportunity which is at present afforded by the repairs which are now going on at All Saints' Church, Langham-place, in the parish of Saint Marylebone. Hardly has a second scaffold been removed from a second repair of the Bath stone of Trinity Church, at the entrance to the Regent's-

park,—hardly have the balusters, cornices, and other parts of the wretched Bath stone masonry of that ill-fated church, which forms one of the only two or three buildings in which Sir John Soane ever could be perverted from prudence and economy into the use of such a mean and spendthrift material,—hardly have its perished tower-pilasters been chopped away for the admission of a new facing of the same treacherous material, leaving the remainder of the stone-work of the edifice to be renewed in a very few years hence,—hardly has this occurred at one end of Portland-place, when to the church at the other end of it, a scaffolding is raised to effect a much more extensive repair to the fabric of another building erected hardly twenty years ago. Of this the balusters of its parapet are altogether rotten, many of its cornice-stones are entirely perished, of some their "drip" being totally gone, and some having scarcely any surface left; of the portico of the church the column-shafts appear to have suffered violent disease, half their component blocks having lost their wrought exterior, many are peeling or exoriated, and all exhibit the most lamentable and indecent marks of decay, as though the portico of a temple should bear more marks of mortality than the deceased conveyed beneath it to the funeral service; the column-bases are in many places so weather-worn, as to have lost even all semblance of moulding; the frail masonry of the church-tower is miserably broken, with hundreds of cracks; the string-courses and window-sills are alike gone, to return no more.—How long, we ask, is such a state of things to last? How long is an architect to covet the immortality which soft stone-peelings and Bath quarry-dust can give? How long are chapels of Portland-stone to be superseded by mean edifices decorated with trumpery which hardly lasts the periodical intervals between one whitewashing and another, of the tenderest plaster? How long are we to bear of the advantageous induration of Bath stone,—while scarcely one block of it in a hundred thousand will stay to barden, disappearing like the sparrows, which "may be caught by salt, if they will stay to have it placed on their tails."

We shall drop this subject at present, to be hereafter more amply resumed, only making the observation that we cannot account for the mean prostration of feeling which will prompt a man to adopt a kind of masonry bringing with it so little honour, and so extravagant an ultimate cost. We, fifteen years ago, were prevailed upon to use a little of it in three instances—in each case the decay which has ensued is miserable.

e p

NEW METROPOLITAN BUILDING-ACT.

THE dread of the next year's operation of the new Metropolitan Building-Act has produced no small activity within its future range; this is not confined to its new territorial extension, where feeble spurious buildings are rapidly arising, but within the limits of the present statute, porches, and other projections are arising, where it may be doubted if they could be erected next year. The raising of buildings is also another subject upon which alarm has been felt, and houses are receiving additional stories which might otherwise have remained the next seven years without them. No doubt the panic, which seems to have seized the public or builders, is in a great measure of an unnecessary; or at least, of an exaggerated nature, and for much of it no cause will be found. The most serious alarm is that which is felt by proprietors who have estates in close neighbourhoods, who, if they attempted after this year to replace their tenements by new ones, would find the sites have fallen a sacrifice to the requirements of the new Act for the leaving of open space for the public health.

F 1

INCONVENIENCE OF RAILROAD CONVEYANCE.

WITH the convenience of railroad conveyance, we must complain of the very insufficient accommodation which the public receives by reason of the long intervals which occur between the starting of the different trains, particularly about the middle of the day; and having often to travel short distances, under twenty miles, we, in common with multitudes of other persons, lose much more time from waiting for the next train, than if we were left only to the use of the worst of the old jog-trot conveyances; while the leviathan nature of the railroad system puts out of the question the most remote idea of our being served by any ordinary conveyance, so that on very many occasions we are far worse off than if railway travelling were not in existence. Last year, we had the most urgent business down the North-Eastern line (one in general most excellently managed, and upon which we do not remember that any accident has happened to passengers); it happened to be a gala-day, upon which many applicants were all being served by only one attendant, the occasion, if we remember correctly, some Cockney pony-racing at Lea-bridge: After waiting ten minutes, our turn came, when upon tendering a sovereign, change was refused to be given, and while we were obtaining it at the nearest house of merchandize, the door was shut, and we were refused passage; and there being no other train for several hours, and no other public stage conveyance, we were reduced to the necessity of hiring a post-chaise to go fourteen miles, and arrive an hour after time, or to have lost an appointment altogether. We are sure it would be to the interest of all the companies to re-consider and re-appoint all their time-tables, and not bother and inconvenience their passengers in the present reprehensible manner, and cause the waste

of their most precious possession—TIME. The day will come when the machinery of railways will be so perfected, that passengers will safely, and by statute may demand, at any hour or half-hour from sun-rise to sun-set, conveyance to any station they may please. The destruction of the coach system imperiously demands this for the public convenience; and we cannot see because the attendants may require two or three hours for dinner in the middle of the day, why those who dine at no such time should be so troubled and annoyed. If in providing for the right attention to public convenience, safety could alone be insured by the adoption of the atmospheric, or the wire-rope system, then should the use of one or other be legislatively compelled. By the latter system, transit to every station might be safely performed at every quarter of an hour, instead of at half a day's interval, as now occurs at some of them, even near London, as at the Edmonton one during part of the year.

e a

INCREASE OF HONOUR AND PROFIT TO ARCHITECTS!

THE following advertisement has appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*:—

"TO ARCHITECTS.—St. Simon's Church, Salford.—Persons desirous of sending in Plans and Specifications for Building the above Church, are requested to forward the same, as soon as possible, to Hutton Dearman, Esq., treasurer to the committee, Springfield-lane, Salford."

To questions asked relative to which advertisement the following answer has been sent:—

SIR,—In reply to your letter to Mr. Dearman respecting the church proposed to be erected in Salford, I beg to inform you, that 3,000*l.* is the sum to be expended. The accommodation required on the ground-floor for 800 people; the site in a level open field; a handsome church of stone, without galleries, but so arranged as to admit of their being hereafter constructed, will be required; and all plans to be in with the treasurer in fourteen days hence. THE SUCCESSFUL COMPETITOR WILL BE EXPECTED TO SUPERINTEND THE BUILDING, AND NO REMUNERATION IS PROPOSED TO BE GIVEN TO HIM.

I am, Sir, yours very respectfully,

WALTER ATKIN HAYMAN, Sec.

9, Wellington-square, Salford, 27th Sept. 1844.

GREAT IRON BRIDGE FOR THE NEVA FORMED AT LIVERPOOL.

THE fact of the Emperor of Russia having commissioned our townsmen, Messrs. Bury, Curtis, and Kennedy, the celebrated engineers, to construct at their extensive establishment an immense iron bridge to cross the Neva at St. Petersburg, has excited considerable interest in the engineering world. The river Neva, in the most central part of the capital named, is at present crossed by a bridge of boats—the Pont d'Isaac—over which there is a prodigious traffic, interrupted only in the night for the passage of ships through one compartment of the bridge, which can be shifted or removed for the purpose. In the spring, however, huge masses of ice, disengaged by the thaw, drift down the stream with such force, that it is necessary to let the bridge loose at one end and permit it to swing round at the other, so as to lie alongside the quay, and even this precaution is occasionally unavailing to preserve it from the destructive effects of icebergs—the boats last year, for instance, being carried away from their anchorage, and with them the superincumbent carriage and footway, into the Gulf of Finland, whence they were recovered piecemeal by steamers. To obviate such occurrences, as well as to carry out the imperial designs for beautifying and improving the capital, the Czar has resolved to erect a bridge of solid iron, on piers of Finland granite, and, impatient of delay, has intrusted the castings to Messrs. Bury, who, when their new furnace, now being built, shall be completed, will be enabled to cast at the rate of 150 tons a week, so that by the time the masonry is finished, the iron-work may be